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UNCLAS YEREVAN 002192

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: ARMENIAN MFA: IRAQ ENTERS NEW PHASE FOLLOWING  
COUNCIL ELECTIONS

REF: A) STATE 225860 B) YEREVAN 2183 C) YEREVAN 2157

1. (SBU) Despite early indications that the GOAM may avoid public statements congratulating Iraqi authorities on successful Council of Representatives elections (ref B), MFA Spokesman Hamlet Gasparyan released a December 17 press statement commending the elections as "an important step in building a new Iraq," and reiterating Armenia's "commitment to support reconstruction." "We are hopeful that the newly elected parliament would succeed in furthering democratic processes and would contribute to the unity of the nation," Gasparyan said in the short press statement.

2. (SBU) Gasparyan's remarks came in response to questions about the Iraqi election from state-run Armenpress News Agency. Hayastani Hanrapetutyun and Respublika Armenii, government Armenian- and Russian-language newspapers (with an estimated circulation of less than ten thousand combined) published the statement on December 20 without editorial comment.

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COMMENT: ARMENIAN STATEMENT REFLECTS OUR REQUEST  
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3. (SBU) We believe Gasparyan's statement represents a genuine effort on the part of the MFA to act on our ref A request, despite the GOAM's sensitive position vis-a-vis its own elections problems (ref C).  
GODFREY